"REEL A QUATRE."

"Sure to be a good crowd to-night, because theys a dance after yer lecture. Whoa! Got a match? This darnation corduroy road liken to shake my gizzard loose.

"Yep; they got old man Peters and his daughter for an orchestry, and Jimmy Taylor to call the dances. You stick around till about midnight when the boys gits warmed up proper, and you'll see some shufflin."

With these words, my host, an old Indiana-Alberta farmer, pulled up his lop-eared mules in the shelter of a log school-house, and we climbed stiffly down from the springless wagon in which we had just completed a body-racking voyage of ten miles over a road made up at intervals of muskeg, stumps and large stretches of corduroy. The small building was already nearly filled with people, but one could still see them coming over the two trails north and west, leading away from the school, which served as church and community centre as well. Some were on foot, many on horseback, while large families were jumbled together in huge crashing farm wagons, or dish-wheeled democrats.

Inside the building there was an atmosphere of expectation. Twenty or thirty children in the front seats, pushed about and giggled with delight at the prospect of moving pictures. Mothers with small babies sat on the deal benches at the back, near the stove; and at the door stood a number of very young men swanking cigarettes and trading badinage with young ladies of their own age. The older men, as the custom is, stayed outside and talked shop until the last minute.

As a representative of the Extension Department of the University of Alberta, I had been invited to visit the district and give a lecture on some subject that would - to quote the application - interest, entertain, and educate the people -- No easy task, the reader will admit. For the sake of the children, many of whom had never seen a "Movie", I had brought along a moving-picture machine and eight reels of film, a judicious selection of educational and comic features. This part of the entertainment over, the children were moved to the rear and we had an hour's discussion of a subject of close interest to the older people and their problems as community leaders.

My work, therefore, was over at eleven o'clock, and I was at liberty to watch and enjoy what followed. Benches and chairs were pushed back and arranged around the wall. Babies were stowed away in apple-boxes and bundles of coats at the end of the building, and the decks were thus cleared for action. Women, fat and lean, old and young, ranged themselves on the seats around the wall, while the young men, in a milling group about the door, looked them over and made mental notes as to the disposal of their dances.

And now the orchestry began to tune up. A raw-boned English maiden of fifty took the stool at the wheezy little "cabinet organ" and began to sound certain chords in a vague way, while her father, with anxious air, alternately loosened and tightened the strings of his violin. After ten minutes of grievous caterwauling the old man appeared satisfied, and with a dash they were off. The raw-boned lady, with fiercely peddling legs, and flying fingers, sent the gasping organ into an endless four movement vamp which with variations would have served equally well for any tune. On this

occasion the old man, with fiddle firmly fixed in the crook of his long arm, and with one foot beating time, launched into the "Irish Washerwoman".

"Choose yer partners for a Kudrille", shouted Jimmy Taylor who, with fresh shaved neck and Sunday clothes had taken his stand solemnly on the platform beside the orchestry.

And now, in three groups of eight, the melee began. To one unaccustomed to this sort of dance, it is marvellous how the involved movements are carried through. In a raucous voice the "caller" directs the formations. Keeping time with the music, he roars out his commands in a rough sort of rhyme, and woe betide the man who loses his head and fails to "follow through"; he is quite likely to be trampled under foot.

"Balance yer pardners one and all
And gran right an left around the hall.
Promenade round in a single file
Lady in the lead in the Injun style.
Ladies bow low and the gents bow under,
Couple up tight and swing like thunder."

And such swinging! With a whoop of delight, the cave man clutches his woman and they swing till her feet leave the floor. There are faint screams from the women and loud shouts from the men; then, gasping for breath, they wait the next command:

"Lady round the gent and the gent goes so,
And the lady round the gent and the gent don't go,
Leave the lady and home you go,
Opposite the gent with a do-se-do.
Lady round the lady and the gent goes so,
Lady round the gent and the gent don't go.

Was there ever such gaiety! Old men and women, middle-aged and flappers tore into the dance as if inspired. Enthusiasm mounted higher. With straight back, eyes set, and her head thrown back

like a runner, the organist paddled her way to triumph. Her father of eighty had thrown off his years with his coat, and fiddled like one inspired. And now Jimmy Taylor, as the signal for the curtain, sprang into the fray himself and from the whirling crowd sent out the last call of the dance:

"Jump straight up and never come down
And swing that calico round and round".

With impassioned shouts the sturdy sweating males sprang high in the air cracking their heels together before coming down, and putting all their energy into the last swing, whirling their panting partners off the floor till the air seemed full of flying heels.

Other dances followed, of course, till the first streaks of dawn began to appear in the heavens. But the fine frenzy of that first quadrille I shall never forget.

"Great sport: Mr. Harris," I remarked as we bumped on our way homeward. Great, healthy, life-giving fun! That will cheer them up for a week."

"Sure - that's right! It's one way to forgit wheat at 60 cents a bushel, eggs at 12 cents a dozen, and boots at $8.00 a pair. If it w'ant for the odd dance and an occasional visit from you fellows we'd all go batty, I guess.

"Yep, good sport! sure enough, but ye know old man Peters aint fiddlin so good as he use ter do. Gittin stiff, I guess.

"Well, here we are. Jist you turn in and git some sleep. Me! I'm ggoin' to round up the cows".

But sleep refused to come. Instead, my brain kept singing -

"Now swing the one that looks so sweet,
Now swing the one with them big feet,
Now swing the one with the funny bone,
Now swing the one you call yer own."